

VERMONT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Woodstock Union High School Library, 496-1 Woodstock Road (Route 4), Woodstock
May 18, 2010

The State Board and Department of Education provide support and leadership in the transformation of the Vermont education system in order to give each learner the opportunity to succeed in the 21st century.

Approved MINUTES

The current month's meeting agenda and packet materials may be accessed electronically at:
<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/board/schedule.html#packet>

Present:

Board Members: Alex Melville; Robert Kelley; Brian Vachon; Kathy Larsen; Don Collins; Stephan Morse; Chair Fayneese Miller (9:22 a.m.)

DOE Staff: Armando Vilaseca, Commissioner; Carol King; Jill Remick; Mark Oettinger; Bill Talbott; Gail Taylor; Michael Hock; Rae Ann Knopf

Others: Rick Hilton; Greg Schillinger; Tom DeBalsi; Meg Gallagher (superintendent); Jessica Melville; Julian Scherding; Jordan Fields; Camille Ertel; Sophie Leiter; Heidi Keller

Preliminaries

Item A: Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance

Kathy Larsen, Vice-chair, called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item B: Roll Call and Introductions

Chair, Board members introduced themselves, as did others in attendance.

Item C: Announcements, Board Member Updates (Chair, Board Members)

Don Collins noted he has been receiving information from National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) regarding National Common Core Standards and is interested in attending the NASBE conference in Salt Lake City in October. National Common Core Standards will be discussed later in the day.

Chair Fayneese Miller discussed a NASBE conference call on Monday focused on the rural states letter signed by Commissioner Vilaseca and 14 other commissioners, and re-signed by the states' senators, in order to inform Secretary Arne Duncan on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and Race to the Top. The charter school issue did cost several states' points in the Race to the Top application. She concludes that we made the right decision to not apply for RttT based on this and other information from the several other states who will not apply. NASBE is hoping to draft some informational key topics for Secretary Duncan to consider (charter schools, definition of rule, etc.). Several rural states will not apply.

Item D: Public to be Heard – No one signed up to speak.

Item E: Commissioner's Update (Armando Vilaseca, Commissioner)

Commissioner Vilaseca thanked Alex Melville for his time on the Board. Woodstock Union High School is Alex's school.

The Legislative session has closed and the Legislature did pass a voluntary school district consolidation bill that includes tax incentives for merging districts. In addition, the Legislature instructed the department to provide targets for all supervisory unions to meet reduced spending requirements for the state budget.

On Monday, Commissioner Vilaseca accompanied Senator Sanders' staff member Emily Bishop on tours of Vermont schools to discuss the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Transformation.

Item F: Legislative and Budget Updates (Armando Vilaseca, Bill Talbott, Mark Oettinger)

Stephan Morse asked about the status of the Redistricting Commission put together by the Board at last month's meeting.

Bill Talbott reported on the budget for FY2011. The budget bill has not yet been signed. The Department of Education budget was approved as submitted with a three percent decrease. The Education Fund distributed to school districts is set. Challenges for Change required a decrease in FY 2011 and those savings have been met, based on the budgets that were passed were essentially level funded across the state by school boards. Challenges for Change in FY2012 is directed at local school boards. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds will be gone after FY2012. The legislation calls for \$23.2 million in reductions for local school budgets. The DOE is responsible for making recommended targets to supervisory unions for their districts and technical centers by July. The commissioner then reports the results of that January 15. The DOE will calculate the target district by district, then add the total up by SU, and make those figures public.

Concurrently Congress is considering an education jobs bill meant to create teaching jobs across the country.

The Board discussed the advantage of school district mergers for education opportunities but also to bring about long term financial savings that may mitigate some of the financial issues currently facing schools.

General Counsel Mark Oettinger spoke to the Board about the major educational bills that passed the Legislature and become law this session. Many of the bills underwent major changes in the last few days of the session.

- The miscellaneous education bill did not pass.
- H. 66, originally the special education graduation walk bill, ended up including several other education items:
 - voluntary merger bill, which includes tax incentives for school districts to merge, Regional Education Districts (REDs).
 - allows non-contiguous merging and allows choice to be maintained with districts vote to do so.
 - Cost-benefit-analysis must be done, and the Board has to give approval to the creation of a unified union school district taking that into consideration.
 - support funding to assist in transitional costs.

- The Board and DOE must share a model for districts to examine for consideration.
 - requirement of a virtual merger - the standardization of supervisory union functions.
 - The DOE is also required to find data on classroom size in order to create a model policy for schools.
- Distance Learning access will be increased from one statewide institution to several – any one approved by the U.S. Department of Education.
 - The Department for Children and Families and VTDOE will revisit the MOU regarding investigations of individuals related to schools or students. In addition, this makes it illegal to withhold information about an educator who has harmed a student.
 - The caps for PreKindergarten have increased.
 - A PreK-16 council has been formed.
 - There is no more sunset for Teen Parenting Education funding.

Oettinger agreed to send the links to the complete text to the Board. That information is on the Vermont legislative Web site.

Vachon suggested in the future the Board be informed of things like the virtual merger bill so they can be proactive in voicing support, as that does accomplish many of the goals of the Board.

Action Items

Item G: Consent Agenda

Motion: Don Collins moved, seconded by Brian Vachon, to approve the consent agenda with comment. The motion was approved (6-0).

1. Minutes of April 10, 2010 SBE Meeting

2. Independent School Approval (Pat Pallas Gray)

Renewal of independent kindergarten approval:

- Saxon Hill School, Jericho

Renewal of general and special education independent school approval:

- Laraway School, Johnson; ages 5-22, grades K-12

Renewal of special education independent school approval:

- Burr & Burton Academy, Manchester; grades 9-12
- Lyndon Institute, Lyndon Center; grades 9-12

Acknowledgement of accreditation:

- Brownell Mountain School, Williston; grades 1-8
- Vermont Academy, Saxtons River; grades 9-12

3. 2009-2010 Student Attendance Day Waiver Request (Armando Vilaseca, Mark Oettinger)

- Shoreham Elementary School (one day)

4. 2009-2010 Student Attendance Day Waiver Request (Armando Vilaseca, Mark Oettinger)

- Brownington Central School (five days)

Item GBV: Battenkill Valley Superintendent Vacancy (Armando Vilaseca, Mark Oettinger)

A letter from the Battenkill Valley S U Board chair requested permission to hire an interim superintendent for two years. Commissioner Vilaseca recommends a one-year hire and a study to be reported back to the Board to consider merging Battenkill Valley with another supervisory union. The Battenkill Valley SU consists of two towns, Sandgate and Arlington, with fewer than 400 students. Commissioner Vilaseca noted that he hoped the Legislature would go further with consolidation during its session, and therefore, considers this is an opportunity to merge the districts with a larger supervisory union. **Motion:** Stephan Morse moved, seconded by Don Collins: “The State Board of Education vote to place the Battenkill Valley Supervisory Union under consideration for a supervisory union boundary change and permit the Supervisory Union Board to hire an interim superintendent of schools for one year while the study on joining an adjacent supervisory union is completed.” The motion passed (6-0).

Discussion Items

~~H——Emergency Rules: Restrictions on Use of Restraints and Inclusion (Susan Marks)~~
Postponed until June 14 meeting.

Item I: RTTT Comprehensive Assessment System RFP (Armando Vilaseca, Rae Ann Knopf, Gail Taylor, Michael Hock)

SBE Chair Miller will be asked to sign a Memorandum of Agreement for the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium. This consortium has formed to compete for a federal comprehensive assessment system grant, of which there will be up to two consortia awarded funds for developing a national assessment. Vermont is planning to be a governing state, not just an advisory state. The consortium is similar to NECAP in what it is, but the major change is that the end point becomes college and career readiness. New assessments will measure the breadth of the standards and will also measure classroom and project accomplishments that mesh different topics together. The test could also be taken on a computer. Computer Adaptive Assessment adjusts the questions based on student answers so it can be determined where students actually are, grade-level-wise. Fifteen other states have signed on to this consortium. If Smarter Balance is awarded the grant, an alignment study with Vermont standards will be conducted.

Motion: Stephan Morse moved, seconded by Don Collins, that the Board Chair signs the MOA for the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium. The motion passed (6-0).

Item J: 2010 AYP Determinations – Overview (Armando Vilaseca, Rae Ann Knopf, Gail Taylor)

Gail Taylor distributed the recently released press packet with the statewide results and explained the determination process and the results. Due to the increase in targets (with the goal of 100 percent proficiency by 2014), it is anticipated that there will be an increase in identified schools in 2011. There are anticipated changes to ESEA that may include growth as a measure.

Item L: Work Session

1) DOE Reorganization – Update (Armando Vilaseca, Rae Ann Knopf)

Deputy Commissioner Rae Ann Knopf walked the Board through the new DOE Organization Chart and Work Diagram directed towards improved instruction and learning outcomes for students. She outlined the confluence of work the staff has undergone lately such as Race to the Top, School Improvement Grant, and support to identified schools. The next two days, the DOE Leadership Team will be working with Sam Redding and New England Comprehensive Center

(NECC) staff regarding the development of a statewide system of support, through a grant this group has from the federal government.

Lunch

Item K: *Change the World Kids* (presentation and discussion)

Students introduced themselves to the Board: Julian Scherding, Jordan Fields, Camille Ertel, Sophie Leiter and Heidi Keller. They are part of the *Change the World Kids* community service organizations, based in Woodstock. The only membership qualification is that you want to make a difference. They do work in Rwanda, Costa Rica and also locally, such as stacking wood and building ramps for wheelchair accessibility. A video from Freedom and Unity, shot in Vermont that demonstrates what they do, was shown (Changetheworldkids.org).

2) *Opportunities to Learn* Report (continued discussion)

- Section I – Education Quality (Board, Armando Vilaseca, Rae Ann Knopf)

Chair Miller asked Stephan Morse to chair the redistricting commission the Board has convened in the context of *Opportunities to Learn*. Some of the recommendations may be unlikely. Rather than redrafting Title 16, Title 16 should be updated, incorporating much of the work already done.

Board members questioned if a commission is really necessary for this particular section and if the DOE has the capacity to take this on. They discussed sending DOE staff to some schools undertaking innovative options, to find out how to get post-secondary acceptance of performance based graduation credits and use a model that already exists, or perhaps asking the Regional Education Lab to do some research on this topic.

Collins explained that there was an Education Governance Commission which worked with Legislative Council regarding what can be changed in Title 16. DOE staff will find some of that work so it can inform the process moving forward.

The Board will try to take a more active role in the Legislature in the future.

The Board will not form a commission for the Learning Expectations section; the Title 16 statute will be updated; the standards will be updated; and the rest of the recommendations are accepted by the Board.

- Section IV – Educator Quality

The Board will not suspend the ROPA process as recommended. Vilaseca questioned if the relicensure process was as effective as it could be.

The Board also discussed the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE) and whether the system of the two concurrent boards that has existed for the last three years is functional. The Board will put this on a future agenda item and invite constituents to the meeting, including the VSBPE Executive Committee.

3) Annual Board Evaluation (Board)

Board members have received the self-assessment form, and members have until May 26 to return it to Kathy Larsen. The results will be prepared for the June annual planning meeting. The Board may also discuss Board and Department roles and responsibilities.

4) Strategic Planning and Annual Planning Meeting (preliminary discussion) (Board, Armando Vilaseca, Rae Ann Knopf)

The Board also discussed a roundtable discussion with the chairs and vice chairs of the education committees during the retreat. Also, the Vermont Business Roundtable would like to reinstitute the annual discussion between the two groups in August.

Rae Ann Knopf created a table to illustrate alignment of efforts, summarized here:

Opportunities to Learn	Strategic Plan	Roots of Success
Education Quality Standards	Educational Leadership Instructional Practices and Environments	Leadership Professional Teaching Culture
Learning Expectations Pk-16 Partnerships	Learning Expectations	High Expectations Continuous Improvement School Climate Use of Data Student Supports Relationship with Larger Community
Governance	Policy and Governance	District Local Board Support

The annual meeting will be facilitated by David Ruff. Chair Miller made it clear that the DOE helps and supports, but the Board has to take ownership of the Strategic Plan. The goal is to leave the June retreat with a strategic plan.

The June meeting will be held at the Inn at Essex, with the Board meeting during the a.m. of June 14th and the annual planning meeting during the p.m. of the 14th and on the 15th.

Concluding and Adjournment

Item M: Future Agendas, Wrap Up and Adjourn (Board members, Armando Vilaseca, Carol King)

Carol King reviewed the items for the June 14th meeting.

Motion: Don Collins moved, seconded by Stephan Morse, to adjourn the May 18, 2010 meeting of the State Board of Education. The motion passed by voice vote (6-0).

Minutes recorded by Jill Remick
Minutes prepared by Carol King